

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) tonight voted on a series of provisions linked to the 2010 Supplemental Appropriations Act to fund domestic priorities, including \$117 million to help Oregon educators deal with budget shortfalls, which will preserve approximately 1,600 jobs.

“We are addressing critical needs at home, from investing in education to helping people who face emergencies from Nashville to the Gulf Coast,” **said Congressman Blumenauer.**

“Oregon has serious budget issues, and this legislation will direct millions of dollars to our children’s education needs. These are the priorities I’ve heard about from my constituents, many of whom have been impacted by the financial crisis, and I am pleased that we could provide assistance.

“I am deeply opposed to the direction of the war in Afghanistan, which is why I opposed all additional funding for the surge. Investing more resources in Afghanistan, and putting more lives at risk, both weakens our ability to deal with larger security threats and hampers our capacity to address serious economic challenges.”

Domestic Funding

Blumenauer voted in favor of an amendment that adds additional funding to a bill the Senate passed for emergency spending, including \$10 billion for an Education Jobs Fund, \$4.95 billion for Pell Grants, \$701 million for border security, \$180 million for innovative technology energy loans, \$163 million for schools on military installations, \$142 million in additional Gulf Coast oil spill funding, \$50 million in emergency food assistance, and \$16.5 million to build a new soldier processing center at Fort Hood.

This funding is on top of the Senate-passed \$5.1 billion for FEMA disaster relief, \$2.9 billion for Haiti, \$162 million for the Gulf Coast oil spill, and over \$600 million for other domestic needs in discretionary appropriations. Additionally, the bill includes \$13 billion in mandatory funding for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange as requested by the President.

Votes on War Funding

Blumenauer voted in favor of a series of amendments to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, and

prohibit funding an escalation of the war. He voted to fund only continued protection of current personnel in Afghanistan, and for the beginning of a safe and orderly withdrawal of all military personnel.

Blumenauer also voted on a plan for withdrawal that would include quarterly reports, and requires another vote by Congress by July 2011 – the date President Obama proposed to end the surge – if his actions do not comply with the required strategy.

Blumenauer Statement on Afghanistan Continued:

“We cannot afford the loss of American and Afghan lives nor the money to pay for it.

“Had I known that for the past nine years we would see only a series of missteps, I would have voted to cut off of all funding for the war in Afghanistan.

“We halted the critical effort against the Taliban and started the disastrous war in Iraq, which cost thousands of deaths and serious injuries while wasting over a trillion dollars, with more of the bill coming due in years to come. With the U.S. distracted and under-invested in Afghanistan, the situation festered and deteriorated.

“Today, the widespread corruption, drug-trafficking, war lord rule, and civilian deaths have undercut our efforts, leaving Americans and the corrupt Karzai regime increasingly unpopular.

“For the cost of one month of this operation we could hire every member of the Afghan workforce and pay them more than the average annual income of \$400. This illustrates not just the magnitude of the effort, but the possibilities of other approaches. We must deal with this reality at a time the Afghan people and their Pakistani neighbors are exploring some sort of accord with elements of the Taliban.

“With the entanglements of 94,000 U.S. troops on the ground, over 100,000 contractors, and

countless civilian employees and humanitarian workers, it is impossible to pull the plug overnight.

“Yet the American public and the Afghan people are tired of the war and want the American troops to leave. Six months or six years are not likely to make any difference in the outcome, only the cost in human lives and scarce dollars. My votes signal in the strongest possible terms that this war must be wound down not escalated.”